

PS220: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Summer 2010

Instructor Information

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Course Overview

PS220 is a course designed to introduce students to the major concepts, methods, and models of public policy in political science. Beginning with basic models of human behavior and graduating to models of the politics of the policymaking process, this course seeks to address several overarching questions, including what constitutes public policy, why public policy is needed, how public policy issues reach the agenda of policymakers, and how public policy is formulated. It is important to keep in mind that this is *not* a course in government, current affairs, or policy analysis, but rather a course in *political science*. Discussion of the basic features of government, current events, and policy evaluation will play a role in facilitating greater understanding, but the main purpose of the course is to develop a set of skills for analyzing politics and public policy. Rather than focusing on the specifics of particular policy areas, the course will instead focus on aspects of public policy that can be applied across policy arenas. Throughout the course, students will be expected to analyze, critique, and develop abstract arguments about politics and public policy.

Course Requirements

Readings

The following texts are required, and can be purchased at the University Bookstore:

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2005. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*, 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Schelling, Thomas C. 1978. *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

The following books are highly recommended, but not required:

- Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Mark S. Bonchek. 1997. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Selected readings from the recommended texts and other sources will be made available through the Compass website for the course at <http://compass.illinois.edu>. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class on the date that they are assigned.

Exams (50%)

Two exams will be given, each worth 25% of your final grade, and each containing a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions. The course is divided into two major units corresponding to the first and second four weeks. Exam 1 will be given on Tuesday, July 13th, and will cover all of the material in the first four weeks of class. Exam 2 will be given on Saturday, August 7th, and will cover all of the material after exam 1. That is, exam 2 is not cumulative. Exam reviews will be given in class.

Paper Assignment (30%)

A single 7-10 page paper assignment will comprise 30% of your final grade. A detailed summary of the paper requirements will be distributed on the course website. Students are required to submit a paper topic for instructor approval by Thursday, June 24th. The due date for the final paper is Thursday, July 29th. Students are highly encouraged to begin the paper as early as possible and to consult with the instructor during office hours about paper topics.

Homework (5%)

Two brief homework assignments will be given early in the course and will cover various aspects of models of public policy covered in class. Each homework assignment will comprise 2.5% of your final grade. Students may work together on homework, but simply copying another student's homework is not permitted and will be treated as academic dishonesty. Each student is required to submit an individual copy of each assignment.

Movie Activities (5%)

On two days during the course, portions of a documentary film will be shown to reinforce material covered in lectures. Worksheets will be distributed during the film viewings and will be due at the beginning of the following class. Each worksheet will comprise 2.5% of your final grade.

Class Participation (10%)

In-class activities will take place throughout the course. The combined score on all in-class activities will comprise 10% of your final grade. Some of these will be group activities and some will be individual assignments. Students should consider these activities to be like pop quizzes. They will not take place every class period, but they should be expected, and students should prepare accordingly. No make-ups will be given for in-class activities, but the lowest score will be dropped.

Course Policies

Make-up Exams and Assignments

Make-up exams will be given only if prior arrangements are made with the instructor or if students have a valid excuse with appropriate supporting documentation. Students must keep in mind that *not all reasons are valid excuses*. If unsure, consult Part 5 of the Student Handbook. Late assignments will not be accepted, and assignments will not be accepted by e-mail unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Assignments submitted by e-mail without prior consent of the instructor will be considered as not having been submitted. No make-ups will be given for in-class activities.

Contesting Grades

Students wishing to contest a grade must submit a brief, formal, written request to the instructor. The written request must explain what the student is requesting, and the student's rationale for why a change of grade is necessary. Requests not submitted in writing and not providing an appropriate explanation will not be considered.

Final Grades

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale: A (100-93), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), C- (72-70), D+ (69-67), D (66-63), D- (62-60), F (≤ 59). Incompletes will not be given except for extreme circumstances requiring prior approval by the instructor. No curve will be applied.

Students with Disabilities

According to the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services, “Students with disabilities who need an accommodation are responsible to contact their professors to notify them of this need by means of presenting them with a Request for Accommodations letter.” Students requiring accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Tentative Course Schedule

Models of Human Behavior: Introduction and Overview

Tuesday, June 15th

- No reading

Wednesday, June 16th

- Schelling: pp. 9-19
- Birkland: pp. 11-18

Background

Thursday, June 17th

- Schelling: pp. 20-42
- Shepsle and Bonchek: pp. 15-35

Introduction to Game Theory

Tuesday, June 22nd

- Watson: pp. 1-6; 9-19; 29-33

Wednesday, June 23rd

- Instructor lecture notes, to be distributed

Cooperation and Coordination

Thursday, June 24th

- Shepsle and Bonchek: Ch. 8
- Instructor lecture notes, to be distributed

Collective Action

Tuesday, June 29th

- Shepsle and Bonchek: Ch. 9

Population Models

Wednesday, June 30th

- Schelling: pp. 135-154

Review of Basic Economics**Thursday, July 1st**

- Instructor lecture notes, to be distributed
- In-class movie activity: segment from *Eyes on the Prize*

Market Failures**Tuesday, July 6th**

- Shepsle and Bonchek: Ch. 10
- Instructor lecture notes, to be distributed

Wednesday, July 7th

- Schelling: pp. 110-115
- Instructor lecture notes, to be distributed

Thursday, July 8th

- Instructor lecture notes, to be distributed
- Exam I review

Tuesday, July 13th

- Exam I

Models of Policymaking: Introduction and Overview**Wednesday, July 14th**

- Greenberg, George E., Jeffrey A. Miller, Lawrence B. Mohr, and Bruce C. Vladeck. 1977. "Developing Public Policy Theory: Perspectives from Empirical Research." *American Political Science Review* 71(4):1532-1543.

The Political Context of Policymaking**Thursday, July 15th**

- Birkland: Ch. 2

Public Policy Problems**Tuesday, July 20th**

- Birkland: pp. 125-134
- Schattschneider: Ch. 1

Wednesday, July 21st

- Schattschneider: Ch. 4

Actors in the Policy Process**Thursday, July 22nd**

- Birkland: Ch. 3

Tuesday, July 27th

- Birkland: Ch. 4

Wednesday, July 28th

- Schattschneider: Ch. 2

Theories of Public Policymaking**Thursday, July 29th**

- Birkland: pp. 108-124

Tuesday, August 3rd

- Birkland: Ch. 9

Wednesday, August 4th

- Review Birkland: Ch. 9
- In-class movie activity: segment from *Eyes on the Prize*

Thursday, August 5th

- Exam II Review

Final Exam: Saturday, August 7th

The course schedule is subject to change. Any changes to the above schedule will be explained during class.